of a measure of this kind, I should make it clear beyond doubt that Government cannot be a party to upset the entire agrarian system of the State in a revolutionary manner. While the interest of the cultivating tenant must be protected by all legitimate means, Government cannot agree to provisions which, in effect, will amount to a confiscation of the rights of the landlord. I must make it clear that, unless there is evidence that there is a general measure of agreement on the fundamental points arising out of the Bill, it will not be possible for Government to proceed with the further consideration of this measure.

13. One important piece of legislation which will be taken up during the coming year is the amendment to the Act relating to *Kuris*. The present Kuri Act is defective in many respects. The *kuri* institution occupies a very important place in the economic life of the State, and persons and institutions who conduct the *kuris* assume great responsibility to the public. The protection of the funds entrusted into the hands of the foremen is a matter of vital importance to the public and the Government. It is essential that every possible precaution must be taken to ensure that the funds are not utilised in a manner which will jeopardise the security of subscribers to the *kuri*. In view of its importance Government appointed a representative committee to examine the whole question. The report of this committee has already been published. The necessary legislation to give effect to the recommendations of this committee will be undertaken early next year. I must make it clear that it is the policy of this Government to do everything that is possible to protect the interest of persons who deposit their money in banks and who subscribe to *kuri* funds. The legislation contemplated will aim at securing this protection.

PUBLIC SERVICES

14. In my last budget speech I dwelt at length on our method of recruitment to the public services and the work of the Staff Selection Board. I announced the appointment of an independent committee to examine the working of the board and to make recommendations. After a very careful and elaborate investigation the committee submitted its report last December. It is a matter of gratification both for the Government and the public that this independent committee arrived at the conclusion that in the working of the Staff Selection Board justice had been meted out in a fair manner to all communities. Based on the recommendation of the committee, certain changes have been introduced in the rules for the

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working of the board. The board has been ordered to meet regularly every week so that recruitment might be made with the least possible delay after a vacancy has arisen. All evidence goes to show that the policy followed by this Government in the matter of recruitment to public services has brought about harmony amongst the various communities in the State.

THE WAR

15. While we are meeting here in an atmosphere of peaceful calm we should not forget the terrible human tragedy that is being enacted in other parts of the world. The intensity of the tragedy is on a scale beyond the wildest imagination of either primitive or modern man. Whereas even in the most fearful wars of the past the issues at stake were fought on the battlefields while the civilian population pursued its peaceful and normal activities, all difference between combatant and non-combatant has ceased to exist in the present-day world conflict. It is not in terms of the massacre that takes place in a battle-field that the extent of human suffering is to be judged, but from the untold misery to which peaceful civilian population is subjected. It is not necessary for me on this occasion to go into either the historical or the moral issues involved in this war of aggression started by a band of ruthless dictators. I shall rest content with drawing your attention to some of the implications of this war so far as our country is concerned. There are those who think that "it is an illusion to talk of preparing India for self-defence," and that "no power has eyes on India excpet as a British possession." This view implies that if India were not a part of the British commonwealth she would have nothing to fear from the aggression of the dictators. Those who cling to this belief do not seem to have realised the significance of what has been going on in the world for the last nine months. Are Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium British possessions? Or were they on the side of Britain in this war? In spite of the most scrupulous neutrality of these countries they have not been spared from the brutal assault of the aggressors. Whether India will be an object of attack by the dictators will depend on the value that the dictators attach to India in their scheme of world-domination, and not on the fact whether India is a British possession or an independent country. Let there be no mistake about this. It is because of my reading of history in this manner that I ventured to observe on another occasion that India should look upon this war as its own war as much as the war of

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